

REMARKS

Claims 17-33 and 36-38 remain in the application and claims 17-33 and 36-38 are pending.

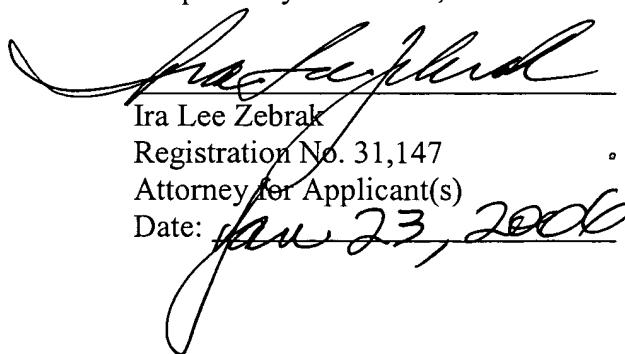
The Examiner rejected claims 17-19, 24-26, 30 and 36-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,429,139 B1 ("Ryan et al."). Applicant respectfully submits that the enclosed Declaration establishes Applicant's date of invention as prior to December 17, 1999, the effective date of Ryan et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection to claims 17-19, 24-26, 30 and 36-38 as being anticipated by Ryan et al..

The Examiner rejected claims 20-23, 27-29 and 31-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan et al. in combination with U.S. Patent No. 4,226,208 ("Nishida et al."). Applicant respectfully submits that because Applicant's invention antedates Ryan et al., the combination of Ryan et al. and Nishida et al. does not render claims 20-23, 27-29 and 31-33 as obvious. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections to claims 20-23, 27-29 and 31-33 as being obvious in view of Ryan et al. combined with Nishida et al.

In view of the forgoing remarks and the enclosed Declaration, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections to claims 17-19, 24-26, 30 and 36-38 as being anticipated by Ryan et al. and that the rejections to claims 20-23, 27-29 and 31-33 as being obvious in view of Ryan et al. combined with Nishida et al. be withdrawn and that the application is promptly passed to issue.

Applicant has requested a one-month extension of time. It is not believed at this time that any additional fee is due. As a precaution, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 02-2865 any additional fee required by this submission.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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